

INFANTRY CAREER NOTES



Soldiers in CENTCOM eligible for \$5,000 re-up bonus

Soldiers who re-enlist in the Central Command (CENTCOM) area of responsibility this fiscal year are now eligible for a lump-sum bonus of about \$5,000, and the bonus is also retroactive for Soldiers who re-enlisted from Oct. 1 until now.

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld approved the Targeted Selective Re-enlistment Bonus (TSRB) Dec. 17 for active-component Soldiers in CENTCOM. National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers in Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan are also eligible for a re-enlistment bonus under a different program. They can receive \$2,500 for a three-year re-enlistment and \$5,000 for committing to stay six years in their component.

TSRB for the active-component was first offered to Soldiers this fall during a two-week window that closed Sept. 30, said Sergeant Major James A. Vales. Vales is the Army's senior retention manager and retention proponent for the Army's G-1 at the Pentagon. The TSRB, as Vales called it, was introduced in September to active-component Soldiers serving in Iraq, Kuwait, Afghanistan and Korea because the Army was 6,000 Soldiers behind its goal of re-enlisting 51,000 for Fiscal Year 2003.

To meet that goal, the Army offered a flat-rate \$5,000 re-enlistment bonus for Soldiers. The only catch, though, was they had to re-up from Sept. 17-30.

Unlike the first bonus's flat rate of \$5,000, the new bonus is calculated on two scales — called A Zone and B Zone — and based on a Soldier's rank, time in grade and years in service, Vales said. That means more or maybe less money coming in, he said. According to an example Vales gave, a private first class with less than two years in service would be in the A Zone and would receive \$6,784.50 for a three-year re-enlistment. A staff sergeant in B Zone with over six years in the Army would receive \$6,612.30.

The program, with the retroactive period

to Oct. 1 included, will cost about \$100 million for Fiscal Year 2004, he said. To receive the bonus, Soldiers have to re-up for a minimum of three years. That time will also include a 12-month stabilization at their unit, Vales said. The Army is also trying to keep the bonus unit specific, meaning units already down range — like the 10th Mountain Division in Afghanistan and 1st Armored Division in Iraq, Vales said. Title 37 of the U.S. Federal Code states that the Department of Defense only pays a bonus to critical skills, he explained. The Army determined that any MOS in those three countries was critical. To reinstate the bonus, Vales said a change was made to the code for Soldiers in Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan. Unfortunately, Korea was bumped off the list of countries that Soldiers could receive the bonus, though Soldiers there are still eligible for a Military Occupational Skill-based bonus, he added.

Additionally, Soldiers deploying to Iraq, Kuwait or Afghanistan with the Fort Hood, Texas-based 1st Cavalry Division, or the Schofield Barracks, Hawaii-based 25th Infantry Division are also being targeted for another type of bonus, Vales said.

(Article by Specialist Bill Putnam, Army News Service)

Mobilized RC officers now competitive for promotion

Mobilized reserve-component officers who have been selected for promotion now have a chance to pin their new rank on about the same time their counterparts at home do.

Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs Reginald J. Brown signed a memorandum Dec. 17 that changes the requirement for Army Reserve and National Guard promotion-selectee officers to first be in position of higher grade before pinning that higher rank on.

Under the new policy, Reserve and National Guard personnel managers may match mobilized officers who have been selected for promotion and project them into

higher-grade vacancies in units near the officers' home stations and then authorize those officers to pin their new rank on while serving in their current positions.

While the old policy ensured the Army Reserve and National Guard did not exceed their Congressional authorized grade-strength ceilings, mobilized officers have been put at a disadvantage in being unable to fill the higher grade slots due to being deployed, personnel officials said.

Under the old policy, officers who had been selected by a promotion board and not mobilized had the advantage, as they could seek, apply for, and take higher-grade positions soon after being selected for promotion. The Reserve-Component Stop Loss announced earlier this year requires all Reserve and National Guard Soldiers, including promotion-selectee officers, to remain with their unit through deployment and an additional three months. That means mobilized officers might have to wait up to 18 months before being able to fill a higher-grade position.

Deployed officers who are projected against a current higher-grade vacancy now will be able to pin on the new rank and get paid for that higher grade while deployed. Those officers have up to six months after being demobilized to take the new position or find and take a position of equal rank. Those who do not will be transferred into the Individual Ready Reserve at the higher grade.

Reserve and National Guard personnel managers are currently working on how each will implement the new policy. All Reserve unit vacancies can be viewed by rank via the Army Knowledge Online portal through the Human Resources Command — St. Louis homepage.

For other Reserve questions on the new policy, contact Steve Stromvall or Col. Geoffrey Jones, (404) 464-8492, or e-mail Steven.Stromvall@usarc-emh2.army.mil.

National Guard officers with questions on the new policy should contact their State Adjutant General Office.

(Article by Joe Burlas, ARNEWS)